



# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

## ***Electronic Pill Dispenser Project***

**Release Date: June 14, 2023**

**Pre-Proposal Conference: June 23, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.**

**Proposal Due: July 6, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.**

**Anticipated Award Notification: September 1, 2023**

**Anticipated Contract Start: September 30, 2023**

### **Issued by:**

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.  
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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## ***Electronic Pill Dispenser Project***

### **I. Overview of the Project**

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF BHSB**

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc. (BHSB) is a non-profit organization tasked by Baltimore City to manage the city's public behavioral health system. As such, BHSB serves as the local behavioral health authority for Baltimore City. In this role, BHSB envisions a city where people live and thrive in communities that promote and support behavioral health and wellness.

BHSB is committed to enhancing the behavioral health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities through:

- The promotion of behavioral health and wellness prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery;
- The creation and leadership of an integrated network of providers that promotes universal access to comprehensive, data-driven services; and
- Advocacy and leadership of behavioral health-related efforts to align resources, programs, and policy.

BHSB is committed to promoting behavioral health equity in Baltimore City by ensuring that the behavioral health provider network is culturally and linguistically responsive to the diverse populations served; reducing behavioral health care access barriers for populations known to experience discrimination and marginalization; supporting communities directly to develop services that are responsive to their unique strengths and needs.

#### **B. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT**

This project represents the incremental scaling up of electronic pill dispenser usage at opioid treatment programs with the goal of contributing to increased take-home provision (and decreased program reporting), as well as decreased risk of intentional or unintentional methadone diversion and misuse. This project aims to avert overdose deaths and hospitalizations, reduce the cost of travel to and from the program, and generate savings due to reduced staff time related to in-person dispensing. The challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic have also highlighted the need to have enhanced tools to support monitoring and self-management of take-home doses effectively. This project represents an opportunity to demonstrate how the use of this technology may be scaled up statewide or even nationally.

The purpose of this RFP is to select one Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) to support the use of electronic pill dispensers to help consumers manage take-home doses of methadone. The selected OTP will be provided grant funds to reimburse the costs of monthly monitoring fees of the pill dispenser vendor and related program costs, and will engage in training and technical assistance provided by Johns Hopkins Medicine to implement the electronic pillboxes within their programs. Funds will also be used for .5 FTE OTP staff.

BHSB released a similar RFP to participate in an electronic pill dispenser project on December 14, 2022. Because BHSB only received one application, and because BHSB subsequently identified additional costs associated with the project, BHSB has revised and released the RFP at this time with an increased number of consumers and an increased funding amount.

### **C. SCOPE OF SERVICE**

The selected OTP will serve 50 consumers annually using electronic pill dispensers. The electronic pill dispenser is a secure electronic lock box with an internal modem that continuously communicates with the remote management program that will be established within the OTP. This eliminates the need for the consumer to have a phone line or internet access. The box secures each day's dose(s) in separate compartments that remain locked until it is time for the consumer to take their medication. At a time of day established by the consumer and OTP, the box unlocks that day's dose compartment and provides multiple visual and optional auditory reminders to take the dose. The box will automatically contact the OTP if the dose is not removed from the box during that time. The box will also automatically contact the OTP to inform of any attempts, by anyone, to forcibly access medication in other trays.

Consumers must be transitioned from liquid methadone to tablet in order to use the electronic pill dispenser device.

This project addresses concerns over the extended use of take-home doses of methadone and the ability of consumers to effectively self-manage their medication. The implementation of an electronic pill dispenser will enable a safe and secure means for dispensing take-home doses.

Two programs in Baltimore City associated with Johns Hopkins Medicine have already deployed a limited number of these dispensers, and the goal is to expand the number of OTPs testing this product to determine whether it would be an effective way of expanding the capacity of OTPs to monitor take-home medication.

### **Training and Technical Support**

Electronic pillboxes have not been widely deployed within OTP settings to dispense methadone take-home doses, and the technical support staff available for most of the pillbox manufacturers have little to no experience on the use of their pillbox in an OTP setting. Therefore, Johns Hopkins Medicine will provide training and ongoing technical support that the selected OTP must participate in as part of this project.

Johns Hopkins Medicine staff will also provide technical support to the selected OTP after completion of the initial training.

## **Evaluation**

This project represents a phasing-in of an innovation that early experience has indicated can contribute to increased take-home provision (and conversely decreased program reporting), as well as decreased risk of intentional or unintentional methadone diversion and misuse.

The selected OTP must participate in data collection and other evaluation activities. Due to the importance of demonstrating how the use of this technology may be scaled up statewide or even nationally and the need to plan for the project's sustainability, there will be an evaluation component to this project. The evaluation will include data collection such as pillboxes deployed, methadone dispensed via pillboxes, incidents of and reasons for being removed from pillbox dispensing, and adverse occurrences such as overdoses, loss or damage of pillboxes. These data, when combined with costs of deploying and maintaining the pillboxes, may be used to make a case for a favorable cost-benefit analysis, if associated with possible cost offsets such as averted overdose deaths or hospitalizations, the cost of travel to and from the program, and the savings associated with reduced staff time to manage in-program face-to-face dispensing.

Because this project is funded by federal funds, the selected provider is also required to administer the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) assessment tool for all electronic pill dispenser clients at admission, at six months and at discharge or as otherwise directed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

## **D. FOCUS POPULATION**

The focus population for this project is consumers served by licensed Outpatient Treatment Providers that are actively providing methadone-assisted treatment in Maryland.

## **E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**

The selected OTP may use grant funding to support 0.5 FTE of their existing OTP staff to lead the coordination of implementing the boxes. This position should have a minimum of LPN licensure.

## **F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The selected OTP will be awarded up to \$142,725.00 during the first contract period, with the possibility of an additional contract period (see below). The total maximum award for both contract periods is \$178,530. Funding may be used to support the cost of renting electronic pill dispensing boxes, personnel, data collection, and other operating costs associated with the project. Indirect costs up to 10% of salary and fringe may also be funded.

Contract period 1: 9/30/2023 to 6/30/2023 (9 months): \$142,725.00

Contract period 2: 7/1/24-9/29/24 (3 months): \$35,805.00

The contract will be funded by State Opioid Response (SOR) grants, which have a 9/30/23-9/29/24 fiscal year. The Maryland SOR initiative is in the second year of funding, and it requires the state to apply for funding renewal each year. Therefore, SAMHSA must approve the funding available for this fiscal year, the funding period for these contracts. This process is underway, and BHSB will keep the selected applicant informed about funding approval.

## **G. QUALITY AND FINANCIAL REVIEW**

As part of BHSB's procurement process, internal Quality and Financial Reviews are completed to ensure there are no significant concerns with the organization(s) being selected. Applicants should be sure to provide the most recent available versions of all requested documentation with their RFP application in order to ensure this is a smooth process.

## **H. CONTRACTING WITH BHSB**

Applicants selected through this process will enter into a contractual agreement with BHSB. Following notification of selection, BHSB will issue a Letter of Award that provides details about the contract and the process for executing it. Selected organizations will be required to submit a new budget on BHSB's budget form, which will be reviewed for allowable costs under the grant.

Please note that applicants may be asked to change their budgets and/or details of their proposals even if the proposal were selected for funding. Applicants new to

BHSB's contract process are encouraged to review relevant forms available on our website here: <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/forms-for-providers>.

### Contract Type and Payment

The contract and payment type that will result from this procurement is described below. Applicants are encouraged to consider whether their organization will be able to operate with this payment mechanism before applying for these funds.

- Cost Reimbursement – Actual Expenditures
  - Vendor receives payment after costs are incurred and reported.  
Payment is based on the costs reported for a specific period.

BHSB issues payments once per month. Applicants should note that submitting required documents and reports late can result in delayed payment.

### Contract Monitoring and Technical Assistance

Selected applicants will be required to submit regular Program and Financial reports to BHSB using an electronic contract management system. BHSB will review these reports to monitor progress and contract compliance throughout the contract term.

**Program Reports** include an update on progress toward deliverables (e.g., number of people served, number of services delivered, etc.). Some program reports may also require organizations to attach a data report with additional information (e.g., consumer demographic information, process and/or outcomes data, etc.). BHSB monitors progress on these reports throughout the contract term and may offer technical assistance and support if deliverables are not being met.

**Financial Reports** are required to generate payment and involve submitting actual expenditures or invoices (depending on the contract type) and to monitor spending compared to the budget or award amount. If organizations are spending more or less than expected awarded throughout the contract term, BHSB may offer technical assistance and support to ensure the funding covers the contract term fully and may reduce funding if all funds are not likely to be expended by the end of the contract term.

Please note that submitting Program or Financial Reports late can result in delayed payment.

### Verification of Services

BHSB audits all contracts to review whether the requirements set forth in the contract were completed as reported and that relevant federal, state, and local regulations were followed. This generally occurs after the conclusion of the contract

period. Audits may be conducted remotely through a review of documents submitted to BHSB or on-site at the organization's location.

Applicants should be aware of best practices in documenting both programmatic and financial activities to aid in an efficient audit.



## II. Overview of RFP

### A. PURPOSE OF RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select one Maryland OTP to serve 50 consumers annually through the use of electronic pillboxes for medication assisted treatment. Selected programs will also engage in the training and technical assistance provided by Johns Hopkins Medicine to implement the electronic pillboxes within their programs as well as data collection and evaluation activities.

### B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet all of the criteria outlined below to be considered eligible to be selected through this RFP process:

- Licensed Opioid Treatment Programs operating in Maryland for at least two years
- In Good Standing with the State of Maryland (certification of Good Standing can be obtained through the Department of Taxation website.)

### C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

#### 1. Timeline

Release Date:	June 14, 2023
Pre-Proposal Conference:	June 23, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.
Proposal Due:	July 6, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.
Anticipated Award Notification:	September 1, 2023
Anticipated Contract Start:	September 30, 2023

#### 2. Pre-Proposal Conference

**Date:** June 23, 2023

**Time:** 1:30 pm

**Location:** Microsoft Teams meeting - Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only):** +1 443-819-0973,,121038899#

Phone Conference ID: 121 038 899# *Please join five minutes early to leave time to troubleshoot. If you have any problems accessing the meeting, please contact [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org).*

All questions related to this RFP should be submitted in advance to [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org) no later than the close of business on **June**

**22, 2023.** There may be time at the end of the meeting to ask additional questions, depending on the number of questions submitted.

Questions posed prior to or during the Pre-Proposal Conference and BHSB's responses will be posted on BHSB's website at <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/funding-opportunities/> by **June 29, 2022.**

The questions and answers will also be emailed to all individuals who submitted questions. If you would like to be emailed this document but do not have a question, please let the Procurement Lead know by emailing [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org).

*Questions received after this conference cannot be answered.*

### **3. Proposal Due Date, Time, and Location**

BHSB uses Survey Monkey Apply (SM Apply) to manage applications. All proposals must be submitted through this system. Applicants must register with the system ahead of time and submit narrative and supporting documents directly through the system. You are able to save your application and continuing working on it before submitting it. BHSB encourages all applicants to test this system well in advance of submitting proposals.

Applicants can access SM Apply here: <https://bhsb.smapply.org/>

All proposals must be received no later than **12:00 pm (noon) EST on July 6, 2023.** All submitted proposals become the property of BHSB. If you are having technical troubles related to submitting your proposal, contact BHSB before the due date/time at [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org)

The due date for proposals is three weeks after release due to an expedited timeline for implementation of the project.

*Proposals submitted after the due date/time cannot be considered.*

### **4. Interviews**

Applicants whose proposals are ranked highest by a Review Committee may be asked to participate in an interview.

### **5. Authorized Contact**

Applicants are advised that the authorized contact person for all matters concerning this RFP is Kelsi Loos whose contact information is listed below.

Kelsi Loos, Procurement Lead  
Email: [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org)

**6. Anticipated Service Term:** September 30, 2023 to September 29, 2024.

## **AWARD OF CONTRACT**

The submission of a proposal does not, in any way, guarantee an award. BHSB is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. BHSB reserves the right to withdraw an award prior to execution of a contract with a selected applicant in BHSB's sole and absolute discretion.

BHSB will select the most qualified and responsive applicants through this RFP process. BHSB will enter into a contract with selected applicants following the notification of award. All selected applicants must comply with all terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by BHSB.

## **D. RFP POSTPONEMENT/CANCELLATION**

BHSB reserves the right to postpone or cancel this RFP, in whole or in part.

## **E. APPLICANT APPEAL RIGHTS**

Applications must be complete and fully responsive to the below Proposal Narrative Outline and must include all required appendices. Applicants may file an appeal within five days of notification of non-selection. BHSB will not review new proposal materials that were not included in the application. BHSB will review the appeal letter and respond to the non-selected applicant within ten working days of receipt of the appeal.

## **F. GOVERNING LAW AND VACCINATION MANDATES**

The applicant acknowledges and agrees that BHSB is a federal contractor for purposes of Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors (the "Order"). The applicant and its subcontractors shall comply with the Order and all other applicable mandates, rules, laws, and regulations (collectively, the "Requirements"). Upon request by BHSB, selected applicants shall promptly provide evidence of compliance with the Requirements and shall promptly take such further actions as may be requested by BHSB with respect to the Requirements and/or the resulting Contract. The applicant and all of its subcontractors shall, for the duration of the resulting Contract, comply with all guidance for contractor and subcontractor workplace locations published by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. These requirements shall be incorporated into all subcontracts of Sub-Vendor.

### **III. Format and Content of Proposal**

#### **A. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Applicants must submit all required information using Survey Monkey Apply (SM Apply) accessible here: <https://bhsb.smapply.org/>.

*Late proposals will not be considered.*

It is the policy of BHSB to adhere to the rules and regulations in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). We do not anticipate that any proposal submitted in response to this RFP would include individually identifiable health information. However, if it does, please remember that protected health information (PHI) needs to be secured via encryption and should adhere to the Guide to IT Privacy and Security of Electronic Health Information:

<https://www.healthit.gov/topic/privacy-security-and-hipaa/health-it-privacy-and-security-resources-providers>.

#### **B. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE OUTLINE AND RATING CRITERIA**

The outline below shows the information being requested for applications and how points will be awarded during the review. Use SM Apply to submit your responses. See the instructions for more information about how to submit proposals.

##### **1. Organizational Background and Capacity (20 points)**

- a. Provide an overview of your organization; including how long it has operated a Medication Assisted Treatment with methadone in Maryland, mission and overall purpose. Describe any current innovative approaches to providing medication assisted treatment your program has implemented. Attach all relevant licenses and certifications.
- b. Describe whether your organization is owned and/or led by members of historically marginalized or oppressed groups, including racial and ethnic groups (i.e., African American/Black, Latinx), LGBTQIA communities, people with disabilities including behavioral health disorders, etc. BHSB awards additional points to help address systemic barriers that have led to inequity in access to funding.

##### **2. Principles and Values (20 points)**

- a. Describe your organization's commitment to providing services that are: recovery oriented, trauma informed, person centered and innovative and that ensures and promotes equity in a way that alleviates stigma of those receiving medication assisted treatment.

Include specific examples of what your organization does to illustrate this commitment.

### **3. Service Delivery (30 points)**

- a. Describe your organization's plans to provide all services and other requirements outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP. How will this project be integrated within your current service delivery? Include the address(es) of program locations where this project will be implemented.
- b. Describe how your program will engage staff and consumers in this innovative project.

### **4. Staffing Plan (10 points)**

Describe the credentials and experience of the staff from your program who would be responsible for implementing the project and engaging in the training and technical assistance.

### **5. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (10 points)**

Describe your program's experience with data collection and participating in project evaluations.

### **6. Proposed Program Budget (10 points)**

- a. Attach a line-item budget for up to \$35,805.00 for the period 7/1/24-9/29/24. BHSB has budget forms on its website that can be used but are not required for this submission.
- b. Provide a budget narrative/justification that explains expense projections in more detail. The budget narrative should be included in the body of your proposal, not as an appendix.

### **7. Appendices**

- Copies of all relevant licenses/certifications including any licenses issued by Maryland Department of Health (BHA and OHCQ).
- Line-Item Budget.
- Most recent site visit report from the ASO, Accrediting Organization, and/or the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), including any statements of deficiencies and program improvement plans.
- Most recent final Financial Audit package including Findings and Management Letter from an independent auditor (preferred) OR a

recent unaudited Income Statement AND Balance Sheet, if an audit is not available.

- Most recent IRS 990 – Return of Organization Exempt from Income Taxes or Business or Personal Tax Return if an IRS 990 is not filed
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted)